

## Verlassen.

Not many years since in the city of Munich a painting with the above name was on exhibition, and all eyes were irresistibly drawn to its pathetic tale of woe. It was a large canvas with background of mountains, mist and clouds sufficiently finished to serve as suitable setting for the figures in the foreground without drawing attention too much from the main theme. These figures were life size. Though few in number, various were the emotions depicted upon their countenances.

Here, fear, revenge were pictured upon the face of the well-favored young peasant; pity beamed from the eyes of his fair companion; sorrow, despair and want had pinched the features of the prostrate "forsaken" one, while the babe on her breast, taking but a passive part in the little drama, smiled peacefully in its slumbers.

The tale upon which this picture was founded runs this wise, and well might other scenes there enacted, pleasing as well as sad, prove fit subjects for artistic skill to place upon canvas.

A certain midsummer's day of years long past was as yet unaltered by the dawn; the stars still shone and twinkled, though paling, when well nigh all the villagers of K—, far up in the Tyrolean Alps, were astir and busied in a manner to betoken something more than usual about—other than haymaking or harvesting, surely.

A great event was about to take place. Walli, the fairest of the village maids, ere the sun gave greeting from above still higher slopes, would wed with the gallant young Jager Klaus Werner, the gawd hunter, who came and went according as his calling led him far away or near, and who for several years past had been the heart's desire of many a pretty peasant girl in that remote village. And who can say? Mayhap in other Alpine fastnesses to which the "black cock" and "gemse" (chamois) lured him, his keen black eyes appeared no less bright and attractive to the blooming "baudrins."

Surely never had Klaus looked fitter to arouse envy in feminine breast than when on the morning of his wedding day, as Aurora smiled roseate from amid mountain mists, sanctioning, as it were, the nuptials, he led pretty Walli forth from her home, and, following by all the village, into the quiet old church with its red-topped tower, its curiously frescoed roof and its faded sun dial, whose daily work at shadowed forth time had not yet begun. Aye, truly was Klaus a goodly youth to behold, strong, straight and supple of limb, and if browned from his out-of-door life, it but made his teeth shine the whiter and added, by contrast, a touch of the more of fair bloom to the maiden at his side.

If ever a word was dropped as to a gleam of falseness in Klaus's eyes, rest assured that it fell from the lips of some spinster well sped in years.

The light was still dim within the church, but the glow from the dawn touched the pale, earnest face of Walli as, kneeling before the altar, she diligently told her beads. Her eyes were upturned and she rested upon a picture of the Madonna the while she repeated her Aves and Paternosters; she seemed lost to all around and unconscious that she herself, in her peasant costume, was a picture most pleasing. She wore a full skirt of deep red color and a black velvet bodice with silver chain work festooned across the front; her hair was braided and drawn down with silver brooches back and front low enough to disclose a heavy necklace, string upon stone, and beads, and ornaments the family jewels, the accumulations of several generations. Her head was decked with a wreath of white artificial roses which were arranged in a circle about her face, and which, in its stiff arrangement lent quaintness to the whole attire. Klaus wore his jager costume—short leather breeches with light-colored hose, and a gray cloth jacket with green facings and large gold buttons of deer's horn.

A long sprig of fresh rosemary, with a red carnation tucked behind his ear, and a similar ornament next the feathers at the side of the green felt hat which he now held in his hand, he, too, was serious of mien, his knelt beside Walli waiting for the priest to enter, but it seemed he could not concentrate his thoughts as she did, for there was ever a wandering of his eyes with him.

The ceremony was long, including mass, and when ended they all adjourned to the gastauss opposite to partake of the wedding breakfast which the villagers had prepared.

As the newly wed pair headed the procession across to the inn the sun beamed upon them a fatherly benediction, and, as if by magic touch the mountain-shaded village and the surrounding country into a radiantly smiling landscape.

A half hour passed; the faded "calb" had disappeared in the form of savory "kalbsbraten," more than a cask of sour red wine had been drunk, and many a toast had been drunk. Then Klaus arose, and, having thanked the villagers for their kindly attentions, turned to Walli and said:

"Let us be going, Liebenchen, or the day will wax warm ere we make the first mile of our walk. I will but step over to the house yonder and fetch my gun. I return in one minute. Wait for me."

"No, no, Klaus, that thou must not do. I hung it aloft back of the stove in the stove (living room) last evening for a long, long rest. No gun on a wedding journey, Klaus. That thou knowest is not meet—at such a time all attention is claimed by the bride."

They all laughed at Walli's brave words and declared she "had quite right." So with a playful frown Klaus gave in to her will, threatening, indeed, to give her so much attention that she would wish the gun were along, and then and there he seized her and hugged and kissed her till, struggling in vain to free herself, she was forced to cry for truce. As they left the gastauss Walli's father, good old Johann, stood in the doorway and raised his glass for a parting toast.

"Here is to the speedy return of my child, my one living treasure, and also a hearty welcome to her husband, Klaus Werner."

"Many thanks, father," called back Klaus, laughing gayly. "Five days—six at the most—and thy household will number more than it has since thou hast laid thy good wife to rest."

Prophetic words, for speedily indeed ere that day's sun should set, would old Johann's hospitality be put to the test. He watched the young couple till, hand in hand, they passed out of sight on their way.

"Verlassen (Forsaken)."

Ayer's Sarsaparilla

THE ONLY Sarsaparilla

WAS THE ONLY Sarsaparilla

their wedding tramp over mountains, then slowly he wiped a tear from his eye and murmured, "God bless thee and thine, my Walli."

On the day previous to that on which our recent tale of events long past opens, the afternoon was fading from mountain tops, a lone figure might have been seen toiling up a steep and wild road and stopping often to take a moment's rest by the wayside. Bravely she pressed forward after each little respite, then soon would her steps flag again.

"Ach, I can no further. Holy mother of God, have pity," was her cry at last, as with despairing gesture, she flung herself on her knees before a rustic shrine, and without care of a well-bound up bundle which she pressed close to her bosom, and which at once impromptu attention. Half kneeling, half reclining against the base of the rude shrine, she bared her breast to the infant, then, with only an occasional glance upwards towards the enshrined Madonna, she murmured prayer after prayer. First she begged for blessings on her child, and then, rousing herself till she was upright on her knees, with eyes gleaming and breath so sweetly fragrant, she called down curses upon a certain unnamed person should he wed, as report most cruel had told her he would early upon the morrow.

That duty concluded, she sank again into her seat, and with tears streaming from her eyes implored the "holy Mary" to give her strength, to speed her falling steps, that she reach T— that night. Finally, as the Maria floated faintly through evening mists from a village far below, she mechanically recited her usual evening formulas. And the while she prayed her head drooped lower and lower, her wearied limbs relaxed more and more till ere she had laid off the half of her rosary she lay prone at the foot of the shrine, her slumbering form a lone figure in the dark night.

At last, however, she awoke, and with a half-finished Ave on her lips she, too, fell fast asleep. Poor soul; she had been walking all that day and for several days before with but poor and scanty food to sustain her. She had, indeed, been a homeless wanderer for many a long dreary day, and no cheer save the cold bread of charity. Only three miles more and her present pilgrimage were at an end. But what then? God have pity. Would her welcome home be a strange people, especially after her tale was told?

The three miles, alas, were still untraveled when the waning moon rose late in the night, and the stars shone in the sky. Tall pine trees, and a few scattered ones, which covered mother and babe gently as though to screen them from view, the sweet-faced Madonna and the child, by slow degrees, as though unwillingly, the shadows drew themselves away, and the moonlight shone upon the face of the fair girl, who, as the stars one by one were extinguished and the moon, a mere low in the west, faded from the sky, three miles still lay between the traveler and her goal.

Klaus tried to awake her, lending quite as kindly a glow to the wall of the wanderer's cheek as she did to the fair young bride kneeling in the church only three miles beyond, just over the brow of the mountain. The birds, too, did their best to give warning to the wayfarers, but their strident revellie seemed unheeded. A momentary breeze flattered the dark locks which had escaped from the red kerchief about the woman's head, then, baffled, fled over the mountains as though it would fain tempt her to follow it. Klaus, who had been kneeling, now rose, and, with a look of reproach that made him recoil.

"Once again I implore thee, Walli—and it is the last time. Come away. Come with me, and leave me to my fate. I love thee, Walli, and the sooner the better for all."

Klaus moved angrily a few steps from her, then turned and said: "I go, thou false-hearted one. But had I only my gun yonder 'game' were first laid even lower, for she has come between thee and me. Also take warning, Walli, that thou timely waken from thy rambles. Take warning, I repeat; there is a task for that weapon which one day shall be used. Grow a bit stronger first, and then we will see who can the better make hay—Walli or myself."

For long years that followed little has been heard of Klaus, the jager. His gun hung unclaimed high on the stable wall, and though at times a significant glance was bestowed upon the neglected weapon, no word was spoken either of it or its missing owner. There was a strong bond of sympathy between the two women, which, as time went on, knit their hearts and interests more closely together. Both toiled patiently for the child, who rewarded their pains by thriving wondrously, bidding fair to become their trusty proxy for the future. Klaus should be gathered to his fathers.

At last that sad day arrived. Mourned by the three who had shared his home, and blessed by his gentle presence, Johann was laid to rest in the peaceful gottesacker (God's acre). It was just after this sad office had been performed that Hansel, now a tall and slender youth, hurried in advance of the others to attend to the evening chores, espied a dark figure within the stable, the sight of which called forth the lively exclamation, "What the devil man, wilt thou there?" The man thus addressed was standing upon a chair with his arm stretched towards the gun. He looked at Hansel, and the boy, saying sharply, "I take but my own."

"Dost thou not know that this gun must not be touched by the stranger, as his hand moved again towards the weapon high above him. 'For since I have been able to understand, and the one thing forbidden by grandfather has been that that be disturbed or even talked about. I think that long ago it must have done some evil deed."

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"Yes, go!" shrieked the woman. "Go, ere I do thee a harm! But first know that thy Klaus is the father of this child. And also that one year ago I was as pretty as thou art thyself. Know that thy gallant lover or husband—promised to marry me. That because of him was I turned away from my home, and I have been wandering ever since. He may continue to play the gallant and may woo more pretty girls, and who knows—perhaps leave them. Ha, ha, ha, who can tell? Yes, go, I say it too, and quickly—else surely I do thee a harm."

The poor creature's eyes burned, her breath came in gasps, and she laughed wildly as she ceased speaking and waved her hand with her right hand, her left, her finger of scorn pointed ever towards her faithless lover.

Walli looked from one to the other with frightful wonder, mayhap to die. Aoh, Gott, why did I not die? It were better than to live on thus and be scorned of all for the remainder of my days. While he—oh, surely it is true—he may continue to play the gallant and may woo more pretty girls, and who knows—perhaps leave them. Ha, ha, ha, who can tell? Yes, go, I say it too, and quickly—else surely I do thee a harm."

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"Walli, Liebenchen, art thou, too, mad? Come with me, and I will show thee the heart breaks. Oh, great and wonderful God, have thou pity upon us all!" Then, looking up wistfully at the peaceful Madonna, she added: "And thou, blessed mother of God, pray us to be true to us before the throne on high." Her prayer finished, Walli buried her face in her hands and sobbed her slight frame.

The woman at her side had marveled at the brave words, though, until the girl's tears began to flow, she had thought her hysterical, sped on sooner, however, was she convinced of their sincerity than her heart was touched, and she in her turn became a weeper. She looked at the kneeling girl, and, drawing her hand down on to her shoulder, said gently: "Weep not. Waste not thy tears on him who is unworthy of thee, poor child."

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Klaus, who had been kneeling, now rose, and, with a look of reproach that made him recoil. "Once again I implore thee, Walli—and it is the last time. Come away. Come with me, and leave me to my fate. I love thee, Walli, and the sooner the better for all."

Klaus moved angrily a few steps from her, then turned and said: "I go, thou false-hearted one. But had I only my gun yonder 'game' were first laid even lower, for she has come between thee and me. Also take warning, Walli, that thou timely waken from thy rambles. Take warning, I repeat; there is a task for that weapon which one day shall be used. Grow a bit stronger first, and then we will see who can the better make hay—Walli or myself."

For long years that followed little has been heard of Klaus, the jager. His gun hung unclaimed high on the stable wall, and though at times a significant glance was bestowed upon the neglected weapon, no word was spoken either of it or its missing owner. There was a strong bond of sympathy between the two women, which, as time went on, knit their hearts and interests more closely together. Both toiled patiently for the child, who rewarded their pains by thriving wondrously, bidding fair to become their trusty proxy for the future. Klaus should be gathered to his fathers.

At last that sad day arrived. Mourned by the three who had shared his home, and blessed by his gentle presence, Johann was laid to rest in the peaceful gottesacker (God's acre). It was just after this sad office had been performed that Hansel, now a tall and slender youth, hurried in advance of the others to attend to the evening chores, espied a dark figure within the stable, the sight of which called forth the lively exclamation, "What the devil man, wilt thou there?" The man thus addressed was standing upon a chair with his arm stretched towards the gun. He looked at Hansel, and the boy, saying sharply, "I take but my own."

"Dost thou not know that this gun must not be touched by the stranger, as his hand moved again towards the weapon high above him. 'For since I have been able to understand, and the one thing forbidden by grandfather has been that that be disturbed or even talked about. I think that long ago it must have done some evil deed."

"Hansel, the wisdom of the boy. Thinkest thou so, fool? Then thou dost mistake greatly, for not as yet has my worthy old weapon performed the special work for which it was made. Do thou but kindly bring a bench, or a table were better, and we will fetch it in short order. Once in my hand again, and I will tell thee the story of what the devil man, wilt thou there?"

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